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5 September 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: FI TRAINING OFFICE

ATTENTION :

FROM :

RJM/OIS

SUBJECT : Evaluation of Southeast Asia Program

1. In general, the theory behind the program is very good. Such a program, if properly presented, could be extremely valuable in the training of analysts. Such a program could and should supply the basic tools for a research worker in an area who has only a limited knowledge of the area. In my opinion, the Southeast Asia Area Program failed to meet its potential for the following reasons:

a. Non-course reasons:

(1) The course was given at a bad time of the day. The period between 1500 and 1700, particularly during the hot summer weather, is the time of minimum mental absorption. A morning class would be much better.

(2) The room that was used was definitely not conducive to concentrated study. The room was poorly lighted and extremely poorly ventilated (no windows). This room would not be a good classroom even in the non-summer months.

b. Course reasons:

(1) The time allotted to the course was too short. A doubling of the four-week period is about the minimum necessary to properly cover the material. A good example of this was the political history course. [redacted] was only able to cover Indonesia and the Philippines with any degree of completeness. He had to skim over the rest of the area to even mention all the countries of Southeast Asia.

(2) The arrangement of the material was not as effective as it might have been. A once-a-week view of each phase with little planned interrelationship of the material confused

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some of the people and caused a waste of time because of the number of questions raised that would have been answered had there been more coordination between the lecturers, or had the geographic and historical portions of the course been scheduled for the early weeks and the economic program for the latter weeks.

(3) The scope of material covered was relevant to normal work problems and would have been very effective were it not for the reasons presented above.

2. The staff of instructors was fairly well chosen. The class as a whole felt that [redacted] presentations on culture and religion, and [redacted] material on political history were excellent. [redacted] the economics lecturer, seemed to have difficulty keeping his material basic enough and general enough to meet the purposes of the course. Had the room been filled with economics specialists he undoubtedly could have done a better job. While [redacted] the geographer, was limited in time and frequently lost himself in too many details, his talks on the demographic problems were excellent.

3. As for lecture-discussion balance and outside readings, I think the present policies should be continued. We all benefitted from the questions and comments of the other students. However, if the lecturers were from this agency, and all in the room had top clearance, more current problems could have been discussed. With such an arrangement, perhaps the last week or two of an eight-week course could be devoted to seminars on various current problems.

4. As for myself I feel that I did not gain very much from the program. This is due, however, to the fact that I have already had some previous training in this field rather than to the inadequacy of the program. There is a definite need for a well-coordinated training program of this sort that could fill the gaps in the training of newly-assigned personnel.

5. In my criticisms I have endeavored to include comments made by other students in the course as well as my own opinions.